(a) the steps which are being taken by Government to give relief to passengers in local trains in Mumbai;

(b) whether Government proposes to constitute any committee consisting of Members of Parliament which would consider to provide better facilities to the passengers in local trains; and

(c) if so, by when; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) To give relief to the passengers in local trains in Mumbai area, Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) services have been increased by 18.43% in Central Railway and 20.15% in Western Railway since 2004 onwards. Besides state-of-the-art Electric Multiple Unit (EMUs) with 3 phase (IGBT) Insulated Gate Bipolar Transistor propulsion system and air suspension arrangement are being introduced in Mumbai area with following additional features for providing better facilities to the passengers.

i) Forced air ventilation system.

ii) GPS based Passenger information system.

iii) Aesthetically designed quality passengers seats.

iv) Higher acceleration and deceleration.

v) Improved lift of windows with fixed Poly Carbonate Louver with tinted glass.

vi) Soothing interior and exterior colour schemes.

vii) Better illumination.

viii) Regenerative braking.- resulting in reduced noise level & energy saving.

ix) Running of ladies only EMU trains to specified timings.

x) Augmentation by extra coaches in existing services.

xi) Running additional local trains.

(b) and (c) At present there is no such proposal.

Silchar-Lumding broad gauge expansion project

2597. SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of Silchar-Lumding broad gauge expansion project;

(b) the price escalation due to delays; and

(c) by when the project would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) On Lumding-Silchar-Jiribam, Badarpur-Kumarghat gauge conversion project, earthwork, major and

minor bridges, tunneling and ballasting etc. have been taken up. Overall physical progress is about 45%. The progress is adversely affected due to law and order problems in the region. Cost of the project has increased due to various reasons including price escalation, change in scope of work, standard of construction etc. The anticipated cost as per Budget, 2009-10 is Rs.2500 crore. The project is targeted for completion by March, 2012.

Allocation of adequate funds for rail projects in Andhra Pradesh

2598. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh has written a letter on 27th August, 2008 for adequate allocation of funds for the ongoing projects, sanction of new lines and introduction of new passenger services in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the present status of the requests made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. Request from Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has been received for allotment of funds for ongoing projects, taking up new projects and introduction of trains. Funds are allotted for sanctioned works yearly, keeping in view stage of project and availability of resources. About Rs. 800 crore has been provided in Budget 2009-10 for the projects falling partly/fully in Andhra Pradesh. For new projects, survey have been conducted/taken up wherever necessary. Introduction of Visakhapatnam-Mumbai Express (tri-weekly) *via* Secunderabad and Nizamuddin-Bangalore Rajdhani Express (tri-weekly) *via* Secunderabad have been announced in the Railway Budget 2009-10. These will provide additional service for Secunderabad-Mumbai and Secunderabad-Bangalore overnight passengers. The other requests have not been found feasible due to operational and resource constraints.

Delayed rail projects

2599. SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for delay of conversion to broad gauge of Rangia-Ragapada-Morkongselek route under North Frontier Railway; and

(b) the reasons for delay in doubling the track on existing Meerut-Saharanpur route under Northern Railway which is pending since last 40 years despite assurances given by the then Railway Ministers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) On Rangia-Rangpara North section of Rangia-Murkongselek with linked fingers gauge conversion project, works of formation, bridges etc. has been taken up. On Rangpara North-Murkongselek section, tenders for bridges are being processed. The work is progressing as per availability of resources. Frequent bandhs are also affecting progress of works. The project is targeted for completion by March, 2013.